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ficult to retract. From such slight beginnings arose this stupendous movement of Spiritualism, developing one after another of alleged communications with forbidden spirits; adding cabinet *séances*, materializations, second-sight, and a host of modified conjuring-tricks, as proofs of supernatural agency, — a complete systematization, in which mediums and phenomena were explained with an insane logic and a morbid imagination; and, worse than all, the pitiable deception of countless simple-minded folk upon matters nearest and dearest to them. To this tale of constant opposition between fanaticism and science, the many investigations showing the groundlessness of these claims, we can now add the free and full confession of fraud on the part of the originators. The two heroines of the story are certainly to be praised for this avowal; and their romantic but hardly admirable career contains no better action than this. But whether this is really "the death-blow to Spiritualism" must be questioned. Such movements die slowly. Its adherents will claim an evidence independent of the Fox sisters, and ascribe to the latter mean and suspicious motives. As a writer on such topics has well said, men go mad in crowds, but they return to their senses only slowly and one by one.

AMONG THE PUBLISHERS.

THE *Century* for December contains a number of full-page engravings of sacred pictures by the old and little-known Italian master, Duccio. A striking feature is furnished by two articles on Henry Ward Beecher's appearance in England in 1863, in advocacy of the cause of the American Union. But the two contributions having perhaps the highest importance are the instalment of the life of Lincoln, entitled 'First Plans for Emancipation,' and the paper by Mr. Kennan in which he graphically describes 'Life on the Great Siberian Road.' In this number are the first of the stories of Irish-American life, by Mr. George H. Jessop, and one of Mr. Cable's literary 'finds' in the way of strange true stories under the title of 'Françoise in Louisiana.' In the same number is a timely paper on 'The Re-organization of the British Empire,' by Mr. George R. Parkin. In connection with Mr. Parkin's article is an Open Letter entitled 'Home Rule and Culture,' on the Irish aspect of re-organization, by Mrs. Margaret F. Sullivan. Henry James writes with full knowledge and critical enthusiasm a paper of which the pregnant title is 'London,' which paper has a running accompaniment of drawings by the well-known artist, Joseph Pennell. Edward L. Wilson gives his personal observations on the route 'From Sinai to Shechem,' accompanied by fifteen illustrations drawn mainly from his photographs. The 'Topics of the Time' are 'Christmas,' 'Progress of Ballot Reform,' 'Should there be an Aristocracy of Criminals,' and 'A Confusion in American Party Names.' In 'Open Letters' Mr. Ernest H. Crosby, of the New York Legislature, writes on 'Political Corruption,' suggesting the "formation of an American society for the promotion of political honesty;" and others of the 'Open Letters' deal with the 'Woman's Work' question, 'The Holt Method of Teaching Music,' and 'Herbert Spencer.' — On Dec. 6 the *Independent* celebrated the completion of its fortieth year. Articles were printed from Dr. Richard S. Storrs, the only one of the original editors now living; by Henry C. Bowen, who is one of the two original proprietors now living; and by Dr. Samuel T. Spear, who was a contributor to the first number. — The supplement in *Harper's Weekly* of Dec. 1 contains an article on 'Blizzards, Cyclones, and Tornadoes,' with illustrations by W. H. Gibson and others. — The International News Company of Beekman Street have ready the Christmas numbers of the London *Chatterbox* and the London *Graphic*, the latter having two large-page colored supplements. Neither of these celebrated publications will disappoint the expectations of their great throngs of readers in all parts of the world. They are as good this year as ever. — *The Book Lover* is the title of an attractive monthly journal published by William Evarts Benjamin, 6 Astor Place, New York, of which the first issue is dated November. — *The Publishers' Weekly* says that a new feature in periodical magazines is announced in the *Magazine of Poetry*, a quarterly review, whose first number will be issued in January, 1889, — a magazine to be devoted exclusively to poetry and the study of poetry. Among the poets to be discussed in early numbers are

Mr. Stedman, Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton, T. B. Aldrich, Mr. Stoddard, Lowell, Holmes, Whittier, Boyle O'Reilly, Edgar Fawcett, and Edith Thomas. — The *Political Science Quarterly* for December contains among its leading articles, 'A Study of the Influence of Socialism upon English Politics,' by William Clarke, an Oxford graduate and a London journalist; 'An Argument for Private Enterprise *versus* Public Business Management,' by Prof. Arthur T. Hadley; 'A Discussion of the Legality of Trusts,' by Prof. Theodore W. Dwight; 'An Analysis and Criticism of the Law of 1887, regulating the Electoral Count,' by Prof. John W. Burgess; 'An Account of the Practical Operation of the Official or State Ballot System in England,' by Mr. Edwin Goodby, a prominent Liberal politician; and 'A Summary of the Legal Questions which have arisen under the English Ballot Act,' by Mr. H. H. Asquith, M.P.

— The sixth and seventh instalments of Proctor's 'Old and New Astronomy' have been issued. The work continues to be full of interest. It is beautifully illustrated and printed. The present instalments treat of the phenomena of the sun, its corrugated surface, faculæ and spots, and the sun's surroundings. The last-mentioned part contains particularly illustrations of phenomena observed during total eclipses. In the latter half of the seventh instalment the description of the inferior planets is begun. We call particular attention to the beautiful plates, appended to the last instalment, showing a typical sunspot, a photograph of the sun, and of a total eclipse. — Hartleben's great atlas, 'Die Erde in Karten und Bildern,' is almost complete. Forty instalments have been issued, and only ten more remain to be published. The last numbers contain an interesting colonial map, and another of the whole continent of America. The maps are very clearly engraved, and the topography is very good. The accompanying text, which is profusely illustrated, treats of the geography of Africa. In the following instalments the Arctic regions will be treated. — Ticknor & Co. will publish Dec. 10 a work that will challenge the attention of the entire Christian world, Catholic or Protestant. This is the autobiography of the famous 'Nun of Kenmare' (Ireland), Sister M. Francis Clare (Cusack), whose services in the great Irish famine of 1879 are world-famous, and who is equally known and beloved for her long service of devotion and charity for the aid and elevation of working-girls. — There has recently been published a work entitled 'Handbook of Stenotypy, or Shorthand for the Type-writer,' being a formulated system of abbreviated orthography for the use of type-writers and others. By the use of the Roman letters and the numerals, with which all are familiar, and without any occasion whatever of possessing a knowledge of any system of shorthand writing, any operator, on any type-writing machine, may, by the use of stenotypy, systematized in this work, with but trifling study, practice only being requisite, become sufficiently competent to print from dictation directly on the machine, with a speed exceeding their ability at ordinary type-writing by thirty to fifty per cent. George Lane, 150 South Portland Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y., is the address of the publisher. — Prof. Henry Allen Hazen has published a useful 'Hand-Book of Meteorological Tables,' which will be welcome to all meteorologists, being a collection of the best tables, in compact form, convenient for use, and at small cost. All tables relating to the same subject are placed together so far as possible. Thus the matter is divided into tables relating to temperature, pressure, humidity, and wind. Linear tables for converting measures form the next part of the book, while the last part contains miscellaneous tables. Among these, those for dividing by 29, 28, and 31, will be found particularly useful. In an appendix meteorological normals for the United States are given. The handiness of the volume will make it a welcome help to the working meteorologist. Unfortunately there are a number of misprints, which, however, will doubtlessly be corrected in a second edition. — Gen. C. W. Darling, corresponding secretary of the Oneida Historical Society at Utica, has compiled from manuscripts of public records a work which he entitles 'New Amsterdam, New Orange, New York.' It may be expected early next year, states the *Publishers' Weekly*. — Thomas Whittaker will publish shortly 'Stray Leaves of Literature,' by Frederick Saunders of the Astor Library. — The Forest and Stream Publishing Company announces

'Charley's Wonderful Journeys,' a new book by C. F. Amery. It belongs to the 'Alice in Wonderland' class of juveniles. — Rev. James B. Converse, Morristown, Tenn., has in press 'The Bible and Land,' which, in the opinion of some, will "utterly rout and annihilate the most pernicious of Henry George's theories." — "The Historical Society of Rhode Island," says Mr. S. S. Rider, in his Providence *Book-Notes*, "has issued a proposal for the publication of a map of the State, 'defining the territories of the Indian tribes, and the Indian names of localities therein, wherever they can be discovered.'" — The J. B. Lippincott Company have published Amelie Rives's 'The Quick or the Dead?' in book-form. Miss Rives has written a preface for this edition, in which she explains her purpose in writing the book, and answers her critics in a trenchant but good-natured manner. — D. Lothrop Company have published 'The Story of Louisiana,' by Maurice Thompson, the third volume in The Story of the States Series; 'Glimpses of Great Fields,' by Rev. J. A. Hall, designed to refute the materialistic theories of evolutionists; 'The Lost Earl, with other Poems and Tales in Verse,' twenty-one poems, narrative, satirical, imaginative, etc., by J. T. Trowbridge; 'The Story of the American Sailor,' from earliest times to the present, by Elbridge S. Brooks. — D. Appleton & Co. will publish early this month 'From Flag to Flag: a Woman's Experiences and Adventures in the South during the War, in Mexico, and in Cuba.' The author, Mrs. Eliza McHatton-Ripley, was the wife of a planter in Louisiana. They will also publish a book on Florida, by Prof. James Wood Davidson, bearing the title 'Florida of To-Day: a Guide for Tourists and Settlers,' a posthumous work by Dr. W. B. Carpenter, entitled 'Nature and Man: Essays Scientific and Philosophical,' accompanied by a memoir written by J. E. Carpenter; an entirely new edition of Darwin's 'Origin of Species,' reprinted from the sixth and last London edition, which contains the author's latest revisions; and, in Appletons' Town and Country Library, a novel by Helen Kendrick Johnson, entitled 'Raleigh Westgate; or, Epimenides in Maine,' and a translation of Ernest Daudet's powerful novel, 'The Apostate.' — Lee & Shepard have ready 'The Julia Ward Howe Birthday-Book,' edited by her daughter, Laura E. Richards; 'Aryans, Semites, and Jews, Jehovah and the Christ: a Record of Spiritual Advance from the Household or Personal God of the Semite Abram, and from Jehovah, the Tutelary or National God of the Israelites, to the Universal Father revealed by Jesus the Christ, with the Contracts made between the Household God and Abram, the Tutelary God Jehovah and the Israelites, and between "Our Father in Heaven" and all Mankind, also the Circumstances, Incidents, and Events attending the Preparation and Promulgation of the Second Revelation,' by an anonymous writer; 'Essays, Religious, Social, Political,' by David Atwood Wasson, with a biographical sketch by O. B. Frothingham; 'The Apostle of Burma,' a missionary epic commemorative of the centennial of the birth of Adoniram Judson, by William C. Richards; 'Incidents of a Collector's Rambles in Australia, New Zealand, and New Guinea,' by Sherman F. Denton, artist of the United States Fish Commission, Washington, D.C., with illustrations by the author; and 'Free Trade,' a speech delivered before the Democratic Club, Brussels, Belgium, Jan. 9, 1848, with extract from 'La Misère de la Philosophie,' by Karl Marx, translated into English by Florence Kelley Wischnewsky, with preface by Frederick Engels. — Henry Holt & Co. are about to issue Sir Henry Maine's posthumous work on international law, which was in manuscript almost ready for the printers at the time of its author's death. The sheets have been seen through the press by Frederic Harrison and Frederic Pollock, two of Sir Henry Maine's executors. — Charles Scribner's Sons announce that the date of the publication of their edition of Paul du Chaillu's 'Viking Age' has been postponed in consequence of the time required to manufacture a work of such magnitude. The illustrations will number over 1,200. — The biography of John Stuart Mill by Mr. Courtney in the Great Writers Series will be published this month, and will contain a letter from Mr. Gladstone on Mill's career in Parliament. — Professor Sayce of Oxford has gone to Cairo for the purpose of copying the cuneiform tablets which have been collected there. — "A curiosity in the way of a dictionary," says the Boston *Traveller*, "has just been published by the Canadian Government. It is one of the

Micmac language by Rev. S. T. Rand, D.D., of Hantsport, N.S. The aboriginal languages of North America have long been recognized by European philologists to be among the most perfect linguistic systems that are known; and among the Algonquin languages none is more perfect than that of the Micmacs, once a powerful body in that great ethnical division. Heretofore, however, there has been a great difficulty in studying these languages, because of the lack of aids, such as grammars and dictionaries, which are both supplied in Dr. Rand's work, so that the importance of the work to scholars will be evident." — Worthington Company announce Ida Waugh's great artistic effort in a juvenile book, 'Bonny Bairns,' with 48 large quarto illustrations, every page in colors. The text is by Miss Amy Blanchard. This book by Miss Ida Waugh, author of 'Wee Babies,' and other popular books for children, will greatly excel in interest any book hitherto made by her. However beautiful her other books may have been, this will be found to be of more general interest than any of her previous works. — The December number (No. 39) of the Riverside Literature Series (published monthly at 15 cents a number by Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., Boston) contains four carefully annotated papers by James Russell Lowell, — 'Books and Libraries,' 'Emerson, the Lecturer,' 'Keats,' and 'Don Quixote.' 'Books and Libraries' is an address delivered in 1885 at the opening of a free public library. It is of especial value to book-lovers, and a most valuable aid to those interested in collecting books for private or public use. 'Emerson, the Lecturer,' a delightful paper on the sage of Concord, is of great interest to lovers of Emerson, and forms a most helpful introduction to his works. The chapter on Keats is a charming biographical and critical sketch of one poet by another. 'Don Quixote,' a paper read before a workingmen's college at London, is a very entertaining essay on the worth and place of imaginative works in literature. This number of the Riverside Literature Series places within the reach of all a choice collection of complete selections from the works of a master of English prose. It is especially suitable for use in high schools and academies. — The publishers of Worcester's Dictionaries, the J. B. Lippincott Company of Philadelphia, call special attention to the entirely new edition of their 'Academic Dictionary.' The 'New Academic' presents as a distinctive new feature the etymology of words. In this respect no other work of its class approaches it in fulness and completeness. In orthography great attention has been paid to usage, analogy, and etymology in deciding all disputable points. In pronunciation the book not only gives the preference of Dr. Worcester, but exhibits at the same time that of all the leading lexicographers. — An interesting sketch entitled 'The New Africa' has been published by the Rev. Lansing Taylor. The pamphlet embraces a series of articles which have appeared in the *Methodist Review*. An interesting outline of the most recent exploration of Africa is given, particular stress being laid upon Stanley's work. The author gives a vivid picture of what he calls 'the three Kongos,' the Kongo, Welle, and Kasai, and finally attempts to draw the curtain from the unknown future of this vast and fertile region. He sees it crossed by railroads and canals, inhabited by an industrious Christian population, and taking an active part in shaping the fates of the world. The author takes the most hopeful view in regard to the rapidity of the progress of this region, and its aptitude for becoming a home for Europeans, and impresses the reader with his enthusiasm. It is to be feared that the opening of Africa will not be so rapid and easy a matter as the author wishes us to believe. — The author of 'The Battle of the Swash,' which satirizes the American navy, is said to be James Barton, a nephew of the late Commodore Vanderbilt, and well known years ago in Wall Street. — One of the rare books in American history is known as 'Loudon's Indian Wars.' The full title reads as follows: "A Selection of some of the most interesting Narratives of Outrages, Committed by the Indians, in Their Wars with the White People. Also, An Account of their Manners, Customs, Traditions, Religious Sentiments, Modes of Warfare, Military Tactics, Discipline and Encampments, Treatment of Prisoners, etc., which are better Explained, and more Minutely Related, than has been heretofore done, by any other Author on that subject. Many of the Articles have never before appeared in print. The whole compiled from the best Authorities, By Archibald Loudon." It fills two small 12mo volumes

of only 724 pages, all told. The imprints read, "Carlisle: From the Press of A. Loudon (Whitehill) 1808," and "Carlisle: From the Press of Archibald Loudon, 1811." Of this book the Harrisburg Publishing Company proposes to reproduce an edition, limited to one hundred copies, for subscribers, at ten dollars per set. Subscriptions sent to Charles L. Woodward, 78 Nassau Street, New York, will be numbered, and will be good until the list is full. — Mr. Charles T. Strauss has published a condensed translation of 'Spelin,' a universal language, by Prof. George Bauer. The character of this new language may be understood from its name, which is derived from *s* (the prefix designating 'collectiveness'), *pe* (meaning 'all') and *lin* ('language'). It is founded on principles similar to those of Volapük, but is claimed to be more euphonious, and simpler. — The Second Geological Survey of Pennsylvania has just published the second part of the 'Atlas of the Eastern Middle Anthracite Field.' This part contains eight sheets relating to portions of the Lehigh basins in Luzerne, Carbon, and Schuylkill Counties. The cross-sections contained in this part form portions of a series begun in the first part, and to be continued in a third instalment.

— From a reading of Darwin's biography, an Englishman has compiled the following list of authors and books which Darwin mentions as having given him the most pleasure and stimulus: Thompson's 'Seasons,' Byron, Scott, Shakspeare, 'The Wonders of the World,' White's 'Selborne,' Reynold's 'Discourses,' Humboldt's 'Personal Narrative,' Herschel's 'Introduction to the Study of Natural Philosophy,' Wordsworth, Coleridge, Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' Gray, Shelley, Scott's novels, Miss Austen, Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot's 'Silas Marner,' and Tennyson's 'Enoch Arden.' It was White's 'Selborne' that first set him to watch the habits of birds, and Humboldt and Herschel who first "stirred up in me a burning zeal to add even the most humble contribution to the noble structure of natural science."

— The importance of the study of dialects and mixed languages is well appreciated nowadays, and essays on these subjects are fortunately becoming more numerous. The Canadian Institute of Toronto is paying considerable attention to the French dialect of Canada, as its recent numbers show; and studies of the Negro French of Louisiana have been published in the *Journal of American Folk-Lore*. The tenth bulletin of the Portuguese Geographical Society contains a very interesting study of this character, — a grammar and vocabulary of the Portuguese dialect of the Cape Verde Islands, by A. de Paulo Brito, edited by the well-known student of the Romance languages, A. Coelho. One of the most interesting features of this study is a list of proverbs, conundrums, and songs. Among the latter we mention the 'batuque,' a series of improvised songs sung at certain entertainments. A group of young men and women form a circle around a fiddler, beating time by clapping their hands, singing at the same time. Suddenly one of the group improvises a verse, which he or she sings, joined later on by the chorus. It is a matter of congratulation that studies of this character become more numerous, as the levelling influence of civilization sweeps away the remains of ancient lore and ancient customs.

— The Clarendon Press has added to its list of valuable books 'A Class Book of Elementary Chemistry,' by W. W. Fisher. The author has attempted nothing especially novel in the scheme of his book, but has given as briefly as possible some account of the most important chemical phenomena, actions, and changes, with the laws of chemical combination and the theoretical explanations of those laws commonly accepted. The book will prove a valuable textbook for high school or college.

— The fourth part of J. Macoun's 'Catalogue of Canadian Plants' has just been issued by the Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada. It forms the first part of the second volume of this valuable work, and contains the *Endogens*. The foregoing parts were issued in 1883, 1884, and 1886 respectively, and include the *Polypetalæ*, *Gamopetalæ*, *Apetalæ*, and *Gymnosperms*. Since the publication of the third part, extensive collections have been made by James M. Macoun on the shores and islands of James Bay, by the author on Vancouver Island, and by Dr. G. M. Dawson on the

upper Yukon on his great expedition. That part of this additional information which is applicable to the *Endogens* is included in the present part. The work will be completed by two further parts treating the cryptogamous plants.

— C. Wellman Parks, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, N.Y., has undertaken the preparation of an exhibit of American periodicals for the Paris Exposition of 1889, and requests help to make it complete. He will provide wall space for copies of the various publications and group photographs of the editorial staffs, and tables and chairs for the use of those who care to examine the periodicals. Publishers are requested to send their publications to him in Paris as soon as issued, that the latest possible number may always be on file.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*Correspondents are requested to be as brief as possible. The writer's name is in all cases required as proof of good faith.

Twenty copies of the number containing his communication will be furnished free to any correspondent on request.

The editor will be glad to publish any queries consonant with the character of the journal.

Pseudo-scientific Humbuggery.

THE more mysterious a thing is, the more do ignorant people think they know about it. The learned man alone recognizes the limitations of his knowledge. On our maps the thoroughly explored regions have strict boundaries: only the *terre incognita* shade off into infinity.

Now, of all the uncertain subjects at present passing under scientific scrutiny, the etiology of infectious and contagious diseases is probably the most occult; but, for this very reason, it offers irresistible attraction to all sorts of rash theorizers. At the same time, the excitement occasioned by the visit of an awful plague, like yellow-fever, discloses a ready soil of credulity for the reception of every wild dogma, and starts into life the germs of superstition everywhere lying dormant in men's mental substratum.

If you care to see how charlatans take advantage of such a concatenation of circumstances, you have only to walk through upper Broadway, and drop in at the headquarters of a certain 'microbe-killer,' which you will have no difficulty in finding. Even if the proprietor's explanation of his wonderful invention does not strike you as being altogether lucid and ingenuous, you will surely be impressed with his apparent knowledge of and faith in human nature, as shown in the certainty with which he reckons upon a paying market for his extraordinary nostrum. This is evinced also by the fact of his occupying a conspicuous place of business, for which I suppose he has paid a good rent, and, perhaps even more indisputably, by his having risked the expense of a two-column advertisement in one of the daily papers a few weeks ago. The astonishing effrontery of that advertisement is manifested, not only in the ingenious nonsense put forth as a history of the alleged discovery, but also in the impressive pictures with which the highly imaginative article is adorned. These profess to be likenesses of the "deadly microbes" for which the infallible "killer" has been providentially provided. Of course, there is not a microbe among them. They are, however, with one exception, rude reproductions of photographs of diatom valves. The exception is a representation of a part of the tracheal system of a butterfly or moth.

This use of diatoms as catch-penny wonder-workers is nothing new. Some years ago, an enterprising genius conceived the brilliant idea, that, if wheat or any other cereal were fed with diatomaceous earth, the plant would take up the siliceous shells bodily and build them into its cuticle with great economy of energy. Accordingly he "invented" a fertilizer, which was extensively advertised, both here and in Europe; and into his advertisements he too introduced drawings. These claimed to show diatoms, not as they existed in his fossiliferous fertilizer, but as they were said to have been obtained from the cuticle of straw by the disintegrating action of nitric acid. But in his illustrative plate he was so indiscreet as to figure not only siliceous diatom-valves, which would withstand the power of acid, but also a certain entire diatom in a form in which it could exist only in a living state, with its soft and perishable envelope in place; and to these he had added sponge-spicules